

Proposed walleye & yellow perch regulation changes in Saginaw Bay

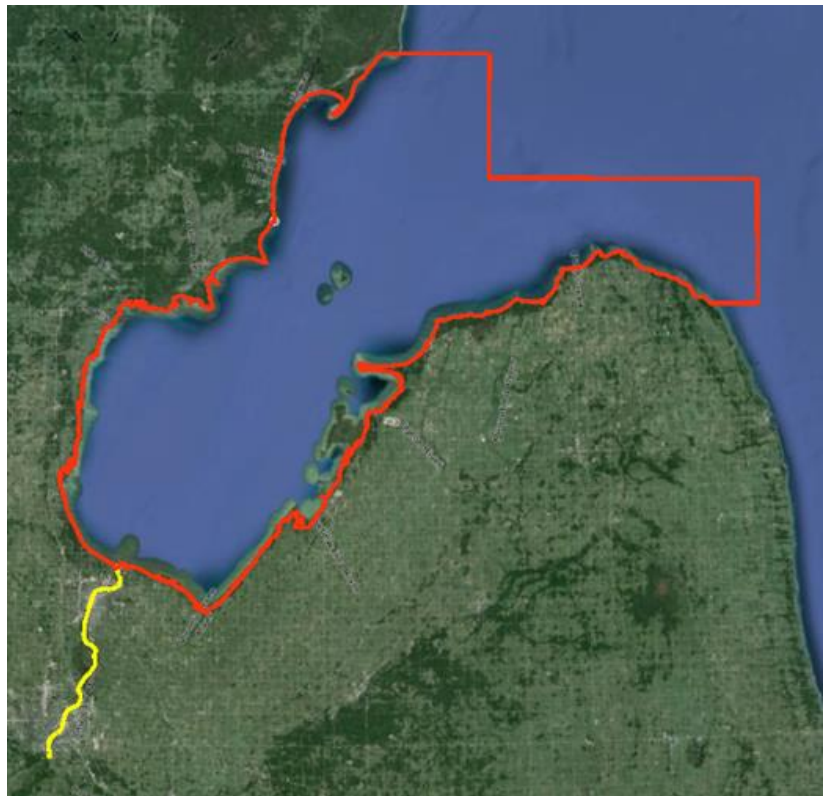


The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is proposing changes to the management of walleye and yellow perch in Saginaw Bay and is inviting public comment. Walleyes have recovered and are very abundant. While a success story, walleye predation is leading to an imbalance with the available prey base. The consequence is slower walleye growth and very poor survival of juvenile yellow perch. Yellow perch are reproducing very well (like walleyes), but the young perch are not surviving. Predation by other predators, including cormorants, is contributing to this problem but walleye are the most abundant predators in the bay. As a result, the yellow perch population is greatly reduced and both the recreational and commercial fisheries are in collapse.

Proposed for walleye is increased recreational harvest by raising the daily bag limit from five to either eight or 10 fish and dropping the minimum length limit from 15 inches to 13 inches. For yellow perch, the proposal is to lower the daily recreational bag limit from 50 to 25. The extent of the regulation changes for walleye and yellow perch is the waters of Lake Huron known as MH-4 and the Saginaw River up to the Center Road Bridge. Seasons would remain unchanged from what they currently are for these waters.

The new regulations would go into effect April 1, 2016 for the 2016 fishing season. It is important to note that these proposed regulation changes will be the starting point for a new management process where future bag limits and length limits would be tied to the status of the walleye population such that if the population diminishes, the regulations will become more conservative, but if the population remains high then regulations will remain liberal.

The DNR is inviting input and comments on these proposed management changes, especially the proposed regulation changes. Readers are encouraged to read further details and send comments to: DNR-SaginawBayFishRegs@michigan.gov



If you are interested in reading more about these proposals and the supporting biological information, visit michigan.gov/fishing.